

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the present application. Claims 17-21 have been added to claim additional subject matter included in the application. Reconsideration of the pending Claims is respectfully requested in view of the amendments to the Claims and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 6, 8 and 15 stand rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,816,724 to Asikainen. (hereinafter "Asikainen") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,065,120 to Laursen et al. (hereinafter "Laursen"). In addition, claims 2-5, 7, 9-14 and 16 stand rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of Asikainen in combination with Laursen and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,999,699 to Zandi (hereinafter "Zandi").

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections on the grounds that Asikainen is not prior art to the present application. The present application was filed in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §371 on June 18, 2001, out of international patent application number PCT/JP00/08652 filed on December 7, 2000. International patent application number PCT/JP00/08652 claimed priority of Japanese Patent Application 11-352265 filed on December 10, 1999. A copy of Japanese Patent Application 11-352265 (Publication No. 2001-167187) is enclosed, along with a translation of Japanese Patent Application 11-352265. Asikainen was filed on December 28, 1999. Since the priority date of the present application of December 10, 1999 is prior to the filing date of Asikainen of December 28, 1999, Asikainen is not prior art pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102.

Thus, all of the claim features described by Claims 1 and 15, and the claims depending therefrom, are not taught or suggested by the remaining cited prior art, and a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of Claims 1-16. New claims 17-21 are also not taught, suggested, or disclosed by the cited prior art.

Serial No. 09/868,477
Amendment and Response to Office Action
Mailed February 28, 2006

Filed: June 18, 2001

With this amendment and response, Applicant believes that the present pending claims of this application are allowable, and respectfully requests the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowance for this application. Should the Examiner deem a telephone conference to be beneficial in expediting allowance/examination of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Sanders N. Hillis
Attorney Reg. No. 45,712
Attorney for Applicant

SNH/dlh/sev

Attachments: Exhibit A English Translation of JP 2001-16787 (54 pgs.)
Exhibit B Japanese Language Patent Appl. JP 2001-16787 (28 pgs.)

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE

Customer No. 00757

Telephone: 317-636-0886

Facsimile: 317-634-6701